

# Constantine

## CHAPTER I

### THE ROMANS UNDER DIOCLETIAN

THE catastrophe of the fall of Rome, with all that its fall signified to the fifth century, came very near to accomplishment in the third. There was a long period when it seemed as though nothing could save the Empire, but its prestige sank to the vanishing point. Her armies had forgotten what it was to win a victory over a foreign enemy. Her Emperors were worthless and incapable. On every side the frontiers were being pierced and the barriers were giving way.

The Franks swept over Gaul and laid it waste. They penetrated into Spain ; besieged Toledo ; and, seizing the galleys which they found in the Spanish ports, boldly crossed into Roman Africa. Other confederations of free barbarians from southern Germany had burst through the wall of Hadrian which protected the Empire's land ; (Armenia, Syria, Egypt, and the East), and had followed the ancient route of invasion over